Please amend the claims to read as indicated in the following list of claims:

1. [Currently amended] Process for distributing network configuration settings throughout a network comprising a set of devices, including the steps of:

establishing in at least one device a description of the network environment;

detecting in said at least one device a request for network parameters issued from a newly connected requesting device;

starting a first timer with a first period dependent on a predetermined criterion;

transmitting to said requesting device network settings ~~after~~ in response to the expiration of said first period unless another one of said set of devices supplies network settings to said requesting device before the expiration of said first period.

2. [Currently amended] Process according to claim 1 wherein the network ~~configuration~~ settings include an Internet Protocol address and further including a step of testing for availability of said Internet Protocol address on said network prior to transmitting the network settings to said requesting device.

3. [Currently amended] Process according to claim 1 wherein ~~the~~ elaboration of said network environment is performed via access to Address Resolution Protocol tables and NSLOOKUP tables available in the network.

4. [Currently amended] Process according to claim 1 wherein said predetermined criterion is related to ~~the~~ experience gathered by said at least one device.

5. [Previously presented] Process according to claim 1 wherein said predetermined criterion is dependent on the nature of the particular device where the process is running.

6. [Currently amended] Process for distributing an Internet Protocol (IP) throughout a network including at least one device comprising a network parameter allocation (NPAA) agent performing the steps of:

detecting a Dynamic Host Control Process (DHCP) request issued by a newly connected requesting device;

starting a first timer, with a first duration T_1, in response to the detection of said Dynamic Host Control Process (DHCP) request issued by said newly connected requesting device;

testing whether said DHCP request received a response from a DHCP server;

terminating the process in response to the detection of said response within said first duration;

at the termination of first duration T_1, if no DHCP server responded to said DHCP request, then starting a second timer with a second duration T_2 which is computed from a set of predetermined criteria and completing said process if an answer to said DHCP request is detected during said second duration T_2;

computing an IP address after the expiration of said second duration T_2;

forwarding a DHCP reply containing said computed IP address to said newly connected requesting device.

7. [Original] Process for distributing an IP address in accordance with claim 6 wherein said second timer is disregarded when said device is a router.

8. [Currently amended] Process for distributing an IP address in accordance with claim 6 wherein said device has a Media Access Control (MAC) parameter and wherein said second duration T_2 is derived from a computation of both the Media Access Control (MAC) parameter of said device and said newly connected requesting device.

9. [Currently amended] Process for distributing an IP address in accordance with claim 6 wherein said second duration T_2 is computed from the time of operation of said device so that a ~~the~~ particular device having a ~~the~~ longer experience of the network has a ~~the~~ lower time of response.

10. [Currently amended] Process for distributing an IP address in accordance with said claim 6 wherein said computing step is based on the use of ~~the~~ IP addresses assigned to the ~~sub~~ network, an ~~the~~ Address Resolution Protocol (ARP) and NSLOOKUP information received from ~~the~~ Domain Name Servers (DNS).

11. [Currently amended] Process for distributing an IP address in accordance with claim 6 comprising the step of

distributing a ~~the~~ reference to an existing Hyper Text Transfer Protocol (HTTP) proxy.

12. [Currently amended] Process for distributing an IP address in accordance with claim 6 comprising the step of distributing a ~~the~~ reference of the gateway.

13. [Original] Process for distributing an IP address in accordance with claim 6 comprising the step of distributing a booting image to said newly connected requesting device.

14. [Previously presented] Apparatus comprising means for performing the steps of claim 1.

15. [Previously presented] Router comprising means for performing the process defined by claim 1.

16. [Previously presented] Printer comprising means for performing the process defined by claim 1.

17. [Previously presented] Process for assigning a IP address in a client device having at least one configuration file comprising at least one set of configuration parameters, said process comprising the steps of:

generating and transmitting a Dynamic Host Control Protocol (DHCP) request to said network;

if no answer is received, testing the existence of one gateway corresponding to one particular set of parameters among said at least one set of configuration parameters

and, if so, loading and applying said particular set of parameters.

18. [Previously presented] Process for assigning an IP address in accordance with claim 17 comprising the step of determining a particular context corresponding to the booting of said device and loading the network configuration settings corresponding to said context.

19. Process for assigning an IP address in accordance to claim 18 wherein said context is determined from the location of the device, as returned by a GPS receiver.